



Saving for a rainy day

For Wendy Schwartz, becoming a home owner comes down to saving – a lesson she learnt from her parents, who survived the Great Depression by being careful with their money.

Wendy and her husband Neville bought their three bedroom home in a suburb near Elizabeth after struggling to find a home loan that could meet their needs.

'HomeStart were able to give us the break we were looking for with the Breakthrough Loan,' Wendy explains.

When Wendy's father passed away, he left a small inheritance for each of his children – including Wendy, who used it to pay off the Breakthrough part of her loan.

'My dad always said, 'If you don't save, you'll have nothing for a rainy day.' Because he was such a good saver, he paid off his home entirely and died without owing anyone a cent. I'm very proud of him for that,' Wendy says.

Wendy and Neville are delighted to have made a fresh start in their new home, with their one year old Burmese cat called Monty.

'Our house is modest, but it's a pretty little house and everyone that sees it thinks it's delightful. We love our area, it's lovely and quiet with trees and birds,' says Wendy.

The couple have made cosmetic improvements to their home, but no major changes aside from putting in a cat door so Monty can have run of the house.

'We've made the place our own. If you put your own touches into it, your photos and your bits and pieces that mean things to you, you make your house a home,' Wendy says.

Wendy credits her parents with setting a great example for money management.

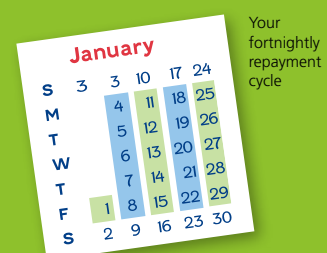
'Dad had a real saving ethic. My parents were just average battlers who didn't believe in wasting their money, and wanted to make sure that as part of the future, we would do the right thing too.'

It also meant they were able to help their children achieve their home ownership goals, and Wendy is pleased to have been able to pay off her Breakthrough Loan thanks to her Dad's gift.

'At least now that's one out of the way, and it feels great. There are ways that you can make it happen – Dad was the fairy godfather in this case!' she says.

WELCOME to the first edition of 'News from home', our new look newsletter. We'd love to hear what you think of it, so we've included a survey section with this month's competition to find out. Simply send in the completed form, and you could win an SA shorts break worth \$500!

You've also been sent a new look repayment calendar with this edition. Fortnightly repayment cycles are highlighted in blue or green (previously yellow) to help you keep on track.



Your fortnightly repayment cycle

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Beat the heat without breaking the budget



With South Australia experiencing record-breaking heatwaves, it looks like this summer is going to be a hot one. While it can be tempting to have the air conditioner blasting to keep you cool, there are a few things you can do in and around the home to save yourself from a nasty surprise when the power bill comes in.

Keep the heat out

As they say, 'prevention is better than cure' – one of the simplest things you can do is to keep the heat out before it sets in.

Create some shade – shade your west and north-facing windows as they draw the most heat: external blinds, canopies, plants and trees can all create shade, helping to cut down the amount of heat entering a room.

Seal the gaps – prevent hot air from coming inside by sealing the gaps around doors and windows with weather stripping or 'door snakes'.

Insulate your home – insulating your roof, walls and floor will help to regulate temperatures inside your home. Insulation is an efficient and environmentally-friendly method of cooling and heating.

The Federal Government is offering up to \$1,200 towards the cost of ceiling insulation through its 'Home Insulation Program'. The program targets homes that are currently un-insulated or have little ceiling insulation, and were built before the mandatory thermal performance requirements under the Building Code of Australia were introduced in 2003. To find out more, visit www.environment.gov.au/energyefficiency

Air conditioning alternatives

When the house is already hot, the best trick is to encourage air-flow so cooler air can get things moving.

Natural ventilation – after dusk, open your windows or doors to allow air-flow through your home. Opening windows or doors on opposite sides of the room or opposite ends of the house can provide a 'breeze path' for air to flow through. Air-flow will help remove heat from your home, and it's free!

Fans – fans are a cost-effective and efficient means of creating air movement inside your home.

Fans are the cheapest cooling method to buy, and running costs are around that of running a light globe.

Don't let yourself get hot and bothered this summer – use the air conditioner when you need to, but try to save it for the hottest days. Keep in mind that the recommended room temperature for summer is between 26 and 27 degrees, and every degree cooler will increase your energy costs by around 10 to 15%.

For more information, visit:

www.fairair.com.au

www.agl.com.au

www.renovationplanning.com.au

www.environment.gov.au/energyefficiency

Top loan tips



Keep ahead of the rise

As interest rates start to increase, it's a good idea to keep an eye on how much interest is accruing on your loan each month. If you can, increase your repayments to make sure your loan balance doesn't grow. It's easy to check your loan balance or make voluntary repayments – just use the 'customer login' for eHomeStart on www.homestart.com.au

'Round up' your repayments

Why not round up your minimum repayment amount to an even number? Even if this is just a small amount extra, it will help you get ahead on your estimated loan terms. Already have an even amount? Round it up to the next even number.

Redraw online and save

If you've made extra repayments on top of your minimum repayment amount, you may be able to 'redraw' some of these funds (depending on what sort of loan you have). Applying for redraw online and printing your request can save you \$40.00 on each transaction!

Meet our new CEO



HomeStart is pleased to announce that our new CEO, John Oliver, is now on board and looking forward to working with staff, customers and business partners.

John has 34 years of experience in the finance industry, including nine years at Adelaide Bank and 25 years at Commonwealth Bank.

In between his busy schedule of meeting staff and learning how Homestart works, he took the time to answer a few questions about what makes him tick, and what he's got planned for the organisation.

What's been the highlight of your career so far?

My appointment to the CEO role at HomeStart has fulfilled a long-term career objective and I'm genuinely looking forward to it. Another highlight was overseeing the Bendigo and Adelaide Bank merger and integration in South Australia. It was a major challenge, but the positive approach of staff was an absolute credit to them. It is a very proud moment for me to reflect on.

Why is home ownership important?

Home ownership is a long standing goal of most Australians. It is an important way for people to build their wealth, and also brings a sense of personal pride and security.

At this early stage, what's your vision for HomeStart?

To ensure that we continue to demonstrate our established values, and achieve our charter and goals. I aim to see HomeStart

continuing to provide innovative housing products, and setting a strong example for the finance industry as home affordability becomes more challenging for South Australians.

What do you enjoy doing outside of work?

I'm a keen sports fan and will watch just about any sport on TV. I play golf (but would like to play more often), enjoy reading and listening to music – good Australian rock and roll like The Angels and Hunters & Collectors. I also enjoy other normal things like spending time with family and friends and doing a bit of the wining and dining thing.

What's your favourite summertime destination?

We have a caravan at Hawks Nest in NSW, where we spent many summers before we moved to South Australia. We don't get back very often these days, but with a fantastic beach 'in the front yard', a golf course 'in the backyard', and the simple lifestyle that comes with caravan parks, it is a great place to be in summer.

What's your proudest moment?

My proudest moments are actually the achievements of my children. These have come in many ways, through what they have accomplished in their schooling and now careers, as well as through sport and the highs and lows which come with that.

What's your favourite thing about your home?

We have an old villa which we've changed and improved over the years. My favourite thing is comparing what our home looks like now with when we originally bought it, and seeing how much progress we've made.

Tell us what you think of 'News from home'

Age: _____ Gender: M F

1. How often do you read our customer newsletter?

Every edition Occasionally

Only if there's an article that interests me Never

2. What information do you find useful?

Customer stories Home improvement stories

Home loan tips 'Green' ideas

Budgeting/money saving tips Other _____

3. How satisfied are you with the newsletter in general?

Very Mostly Somewhat Not at all

Comments _____

4. Do you like the new look? Yes No Not sure

Comments _____

5. What other information would you like to see in the newsletter?

General housing industry news Advice from industry experts

How to manage my loan Gardening ideas

SA celebrity stories about their homes Other _____

Remember to fill out your details on the reverse side to win!

Ron's Postcards: top spots to travel in SA



As a Postcards producer and reporter, I know I'd have few shoulders to cry on if I ever complain about the job... and rightly so. South Australia is full of gems. Here are some of my favourite places that I take my family when I head off on any extended break.

Coffin Bay

One spot that looms large for the Kandelaars family is Coffin Bay and the wild West Coast in general. Here the fishing is superb, and the local cockies can set you right on where to find fishing royalty, 'King George Whiting'.

Further up the coast, communities like Elliston and Venus Bay are reminders to us all of a quieter, more relaxed life where the majestic coastal scenery provides an ever changing backdrop. Make sure you take in the sculpture drive along the cliff tops at Elliston.

Flinders Ranges

Another magnet for the Kandelaars clan is Wilpena Pound and the magnificent Flinders Ranges.

The Willochra Plain sets the mood for tales of hardship and persistence as the first settlers tried to make a go of it, in this arid yet rugged and beautiful landscape.



Make sure you visit 'Sacred Canyon' – a pivotal place in the story of the Adnyamathanha people, whose story is inextricably woven into the geological chaos of the Flinders.

Another 'must do' activity is the walk from Wilpena Chalet to the opening of the Pound, and for the more adventurous, the climb to St Marys Peak.

Kangaroo Island

Finally, Kangaroo Island beckons. The island is full of little coastal nooks and crannies, like the Harriet River at Vivonne Bay on the South Coast. Here the kids can play in the safe waters of the Harriet while Mum or Dad can try their luck in the breakers on the main beach. And for the family, dropping a line off Point Ellen jetty always offers the prospect of a feed of mullet, come the right time of year.



To be honest, my list keeps on going, having taken the family to many of the places I first saw while filming with the Postcards crew. Yorke, the Limestone Coast, the wine districts, the mighty Murray, and desert tracks like the Oodnadatta and the Birdsville are waiting to be discovered. My suggestion: get out and see them all – and remember to send us a Postcard.

Cheers,

Ron Kandelaars

Tell us what you think and win an SA holiday!

Here's your chance to win an 'SA Shorts' voucher worth \$500, so you can see more of our great state. Just fill in the entry form below, answer some questions about our newsletter on the reverse of this page, and send it to 'HomeStart Short Break competition, Reply Paid 1266, Adelaide SA 5001' (no stamp required) by **26 February 2010**. You must be an existing HomeStart customer to enter, and you will need to include your current loan number (which you can find on your HomeStart loan statement) to be eligible.

Name: _____ Loan number: _____

Address: _____ Postcode: _____

Email: _____ Daytime phone: _____

Conditions of entry: The competition commences on 18 January 2010 and ends on 26 February 2010. Total prize value is \$500. The draw will be conducted by HomeStart Finance, 153 Flinders Street, Adelaide on 2 March 2010 at 12 noon. Entrants must complete the survey overleaf for their entry to be valid. Information gathered from the survey will be anonymous, and collated excluding the personal information required on the entry form. There will be one winner and they will be notified by phone.

